THE SAINTS POSTURE IN DARK TIMES.

Shewing what peaceable ſpirits they ſhould have under dark and unexpected diſpenſations.

SET FORTH

In a SERMON Preached in the Cathedrall in *Glouceſter*, on the 17th. of *March*. 1649.

Being the Lords day, and the time of the publick Aſsize.

By A. PALMER. M. A.

Iſa. 30. 18.
Bleſſed are all they that wait for him.

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Viro multis nominibus colendo

JOHANNI WILDE,

Capitali Scacarii Baroni

Judici sanè æquissimo

Concionem hanc

De Deo expectando

Gratitudinis & officii impensè Debiti

pignus, humilitèr, & devotè.

D. D. D.

A. Palmer.

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TO MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS AND READERS, SPECIALLY of the County of *Glouceſter*.

SOme of you, the ear-witneſſes of what is here (with a little enlargement) preſented to your view, were pleaſed in a ſerious judgement to proteſt my obligation to publiſh theſe notes, as they might be uſefull towards the quieting and compoſing the ſpirits of the godly in the complaining times we live in; upon this account you have them; Now, on the contrary, ſome may fall a judging me for this attempt; but I ſhall not inſiſt upon the preventing their objections; If God have the leaſt glory, and any ſoul helpt forward in his bleſſed wayes, by what he hath here taught me, twill, with men, abundantly bear down what ever prejudice or miſpriſion can raiſe.

Onely, if any will ſay, What make I among the Prophets? Let him anſwer himſelf, that grace is free and boundleſſe, and then I ſhall only beg this prayer from him, that, To whom much is forgiven, he may love much: The Lord keep all his people waiting for him, and guide them in ſtrait paths, which is the main import of this weak diſcourſe, and the prayer of

Bourton on the water,
26. Marc: 1650.

Yours in the Lord Jeſus:

A.P.

THE SAINTS POSTURE IN DARK TIMES.

ISAIAH *Chap.* 26. *ver:* 8.

Yea in the way of thy judgements, O Lord, have we waited for thee, &c.

THis Evangelicall Prophet having in the former Chapter declared the great, and blessed deliverances both spirituall, & temporall of Jesus Christ to his people, the glorious propagation of the Gospel, *ver:6.* of that chapter, *His removing the face of the covering, and the vail from off all people.* v:7. *The taking away the rebuke of his people from off the face of the earth:* v: 8. *His hand resting upon the mountain of his people, and his enemies troden down under him:* v: 10. At this chap: he hath composed a song for the Saints and people of God, magnifying the strength, protection, and presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, ascribing all the glory unto him; set forth indeed in a most sweet and admirable holy eloquence as any Scripture we meet with.

In this letter these deliverances, for which this song and exaltation of the Lord is calculated, may refer either to that burden of the Moabites, described so full of woes, Chap: 15. and 16. or to that famous deliverance by the hand of *Cyrus*, and so this song may be conceived to be one of those which the Babylonians so sharply taunted them with in the captivitie, *Sing us one of your songs of Zion*, Psal. 137. this the chief of those Songs. But as all that was typicall of Jesus Christ, and the Gospel-times; so this is a song for any people saved by the Lord, when the times of Christs refreshings are neer, and so it may be more then conjectured that the consummation of that glorious rest of the Saints, set forth,

Rev: 22. 14. *Blessed are they that have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates to the City*, may refer to the two first verses of this chapter and Song.

1. Here then briefly you have the Church set forth in a very glorious metaphor, *As a strong City*, *God appointing salvation for bulwarks*, ver: 1.

2. The Citizens, the Saints entring into it, described by a most excellent character. *The righteous nation keeping truth.* ver: 2.

3. Their most choice and glorious priviledge at the 3d: verse, *Kept in perfect peace.*

4. Their lifting up of the name of the Lord as their everlasting strength. *v:* 4. the rock of ages as the originall.

5. The strange revolutions and turnings of things upside down, *v:* 5, 6. *He bringeth down them that dwell on high; and the lofty City, and the poore, the feet of the poore shall tread it down.*

At the 7th. their adoring the righteousnesse of God in all his wayes and dispensations, we have severall readings of that Scripture, *The way of the just is uprightnesse: Via justo rectitudines*, as the most proper and genuine, that is, The way of God to the just is uprightnesse, and thou weighest the path of the just, thou makest it to appear to be an exact regular way of righteousnesse; And under all the varieties of his righteous dispensations, they waited upon him in them: *Yea in the way of thy judgements have we waited for thee*, &c.

In which words you have them minding themselves of that blessed posture, and frame of spirit the Lord put them into, under all his various dealings; We waited for thee; which with the context may be thus analysed.

Thine, and our enemies charge thy wayes to be anxious, implicate, and irregular, and thence break forth and murmure, yea blaspheme. But to us whose minds were stayed on thee, *Complana viam*, thou cleerest up all thy wayes, as beautifull and regular; and we have *waited upon thee, for thee*, in them.

Whence this plain, and I hope seasonable observation:

That when God walks in strange and various dispensations towards his people, and towards his enemies, his people are to wait upon him, to wait for him.

In the handling of which, I shall first open the duty, shewing the

the excellency of this frame of ſpirit; lay down the grounds and reaſons of the point; and ſo bring it down to the diſpenſations we live under; Now to make up this frame of ſpirit, you have theſe choice ingredients.

1. It is a poſture of relyance and rowling upon God, making him alone our rock, our ſalvation, our defence, our refuge; as you have *David* ſweetly giving forth this part of it, *Pſal.* 62. A renouncing of all other refuges whatſoever, no calling to Ægypt, or Aſſyria for aid and ſuccour; but ſtrengthening themſelves in the rock of ages, and thence reaſoning themſelves into an aſſured ſafetie; therefore *we ſhall not be greatly moved*, v: 2. of that *Pſalm:* and *we ſhall not be moved:* v. 6. not moved at all, as *Davids* faith there gets ground upon God.

This is the venture, and reſolved recumbency upon the All-ſufficiencie of *Jehovah*, given forth in ſo many clear and ſtedfaſt promiſes, wherein he ſtands recorded the unchangeable rock of his people, a refuge from the ſtorme, a ſhadow from the heat when the blaſt of the terrible ones is againſt the wall, *v:* 4. of the former Chapter; and as excellently given forth in that bottome promiſe, *The eternall God is thy refuge, and underneath the everlaſting arms. Deut.* 33.27. Now while the great God is fulfilling thoſe upon the face of the earth, in *the beginnings of revenges* upon his enemies, *Deut.* 32.42. his right hand teaching him terrible things, and appearing the God of his people, under all his various diſpenſations his people ſhall *truſt in him at all times: Pſal.* 64.8. they ſhall ſtill gather in their ſpirits, and anſwer all their fears, with this, we will wait upon him, who is our Rock, mighty and able to ſave. This is the firſt ingredient in this frame of ſpirit, tis to have our minds ſtayed upon God.

2. Tis a poſture of expectation; *Pſal.* 62.5. *My ſoul wait thou upon God, for my expectation is from him. A watching for God.* Pſal. 130.6. *A ſtanding ſtill to ſee the ſalvation of the Lord.* Not running before the Lord, not preſcribing unto him, or limiting him unto our wayes or ſeaſons; laying aſide our own counſels, and inventions, and waiting for the counſell of the moſt wiſe God, having our eyes fixed, and our expectation clear and pure upon him. Though he tarry yet to wait for him: *Hab.* 2.3. This the ſecond ingredient to make up this frame of ſpirit, to have our expectation clear upon God.

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3. Tis a posture of submitting unto the Lord; putting our mouthes in the dust, yeelding unto him, even when he writes bitter things against us; when he puts a cup of trembling into our hands, humbling our selves, under his mighty hand. *Deut.* 33. 3. *Yea he loved the people. And all his Saints are in thy hand, and they sate down at thy feet.* At the feet of God, submitting to the teachings of God, and the outward dispensations of God. *Jerome* reads, we waited, *Sustinuimus te*, we have sustained God, we have yeelded unto thee, we have nothing to plead against thee, our lives, our all are in thy hand. And therfore glorifie thy greatnesse upon us as is good in thine own eyes. This the third thing, a submission unto God in his various dispensation.

4. Not only a submission but higher, tis a posture of contentation; thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose minde is staied on thee, ver: 3. A composed contentednesse with all the wayes of God, that εὐθυμία, that tranquillity and clearnes of spirit which gives a man the possession of his own soul; A spirit freed from reasonings, frettings, complainings and contendings with God, but fetcht down, and subdued by the mighty working of God, to be contented with all his various dispensations and changes, how crosse soever to our contrivements. This the 4th. thing, A contentednesse under Gods dispensations.

5. Yea farther. Fifthly, Tis a posture of admiration; so, *Isa.* 25. 1. *Thou art my God, I will exalt thee; I will praise thee, for thou hast done wonderfull things*; All the wayes of God are full of wonders, and he delights to have them sought out of all that fear him, to be admired in them. So *Psal.* 65. *Praise waiteth for thee in Zion:* his people wait to praise, and admire him in all his dealings towards them. I might instance in more particulars, but these take in the main of the duty; Every grace of the spirit having its peculiar acting to make up this harmony of a waiting posture; Take them then together.

Thus to relye, to expect, to submit to, to be contented, to admire, and magnifie the wise and holy God, in all his dark and various dispensations, is a covenant frame of spirit whereby God entitles himself to any soul, to any people; tis, in a word, to have the Lord for our God.

Now having opened the duty it self; the next thing is to clear the

the point, and the grounds of it; That his people are thus to wait upon him, to exerciſe theſe graces, when God is in a way of various and ſecret diſpenſations towards them.

I might ſhew you the people of God frequent in this bleſſed poſture, when God was making bare his arm unto them; A Scripture or two to clear it. See 2 *Chron.* 20. 12. *O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might againſt this great company that cometh againſt us: neither know we what to do*, what then? why, *our eyes are upon thee, we wait upon thee.*

Thus when God walked in ſuch hidden paths to his people, and brought them into ſuch ſad depths, *Lament.* 3. 26. we know not what to do; the Prophet at laſt, in the name of the Church, reſolves all their lamentations, complaints, and ſinkings into this poſture of ſpirit; *It is good that a man ſhould both hope, and quietly wait for the ſalvation of the Lord.* In how many Pſalms have you *David* in behalf of himſelf and the Church, working his heart into this poſture: *Pſal.* 62. 1. *Truly my ſoul waiteth upon God*, or notwithſtanding, as the originall; abruptly breaking forth from the reaſonings of his own ſpirit, and the apprehenſions of the depths he was in, Be it ſo, notwithſtanding my ſoul waiteth upon God; it ſhall truſt, and hope, and ſubmit, and be contented with all his wayes.

Reaſ. 1. First, the wayes of God are ſecret wayes, therefore his people are to wait upon him in them. A way full of depths. See *Iſa.* 40. 12. *Who hath meaſured the waters? or weighed the mountains in a balance? So who hath taught him in the path of his judgements?* that is, *who is of his counſell*, who can ſearch them out? He *walks in the waters, and his paths are in the Sea, and his footſteps are not known:* Pſal. 77. *Thy judgements are a great depth.* Pſal. 36. 6. As in the Pſalms, ſo you have many full and excellent Scriptures ſpeak to this in the book of *Job. Touching the Almighty, who can find him out? Why doeſt thou ſtrive againſt him? for he giveth no account of his matters. Job* 33. 13. And this puts *Paul* himſelf to his, ὁδοὶ, *Rom.* 11. 33. ſometimes he walks as to us, antipodes to his promiſes (although no providence but is reconcileable to a promiſe) tis hard to reconcile providences and promiſes, when he walks in ſuch depths of wiſdom and judgement that his people cannot diſcern him, he leaves no footſteps behinde him; And in ſuch wayes he delights

to walk in, that his people may wait for him in them; This the first; Gods way in his dispensations, is a secret way, therefore to wait upon him in them.

2. The way of God, though it be a secret way full of involutions, as to us; yet it is an exact regular way of righteousnesse, mercy, and truth. *Deut.* 32.4. *His works are perfect, and all his wayes are judgement.* When *Jeremy* would plead with God as to his judgment, first he layes down this as most unquestionable, that God was righteous in them all: *Jer:* 12. 1. His walkings may seem to us as crosse paths thwarting one with another; yet take them together, and they are all *rectitudines*, all conspiring to a most regular, wise and holy end; Though he walks in a cloud as to us, yet he shines in the light of his own righteousnesse; let men finde out to themselves what crooked paths they please, as you may see *Isa.* 49. 13. *Yet God puts on righteousnesse as a breast-plate*, and can use a crooked tool to bring about a regular work; God with-drawing his light, he is not bound to give; and so he leaves the creature to his own wayes, and he orders a glorious end out of them: man through reasonings, darknesse, unbelief of his heart sees it not, yet still his wayes are deliberately ordered, therefore his people to wait upon him in them; thats the second ground.

3. When God gives great mercies, when his hand is open and ready to poure them forth, he puts his people in a waiting posture for such mercies. See *Isa.* 30. 18. *Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgement. Blessed are all they that wait for him.* So you have the Church moving him to be gracious upon this account: *Isa.* 33.2. *O Lord, be gracious unto us, we have waited for thee:* yea the most glorious promise that our eyes are upon, hath in its fulfilling respect unto thy posture: *Isa.* 49.23. *And kings shal be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face towards the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.* It may be more then guest, what designe God hath towards his people, by the posture they are in. He raiseth up the spirits of his people to an expectation of the mercy he gives; This might be abundantly discovered

vered by the experiences of Gods people, had I time to ſhew it.

4. God reveals great ſecrets to thoſe who wait upon him, and for him; this another ſpeciall ground of the point. There is nothing but I will make known to my ſervants the Prophets.

As the eye of the handmaid, &c. *Pſal.* 123. The ſervant that waits cloſely and diligently on his maſter, knows much of his maſters minde and ſecrets; So the ſoul that waits cloſely upon God, knows much of the minde of God. Many a precious ſecret hath a ſoul, that truly waits for him.

Abraham was an humble man, that had much converſe with God, and he revealed that great ſecret of deſtroying Sodome and Gomorrah unto him.

1. He reveals directing ſecrets unto his people, in the 2 *Chron.* 18. good *Micaiah*, who waited humbly, and cloſely upon God, had a ſecret revealed unto him, that *Ahab*, if he went up to Ramoth Gilead, he ſhould fall, and periſh in it. When there were foure hundred of the moſt eminent formall prophets of the land adviſed him *to go up, and God would deliver it into the Kings hand*, ver. 10. So in that ſolemne waiting upon God, Chap. 20. of that book, when they were enquiring a right way of God, *Jahaziel* hid a ſecret that the people *ſhould go up and proſper: for God was with them.* When his people are in great ſtraits, and brought into lowe depths, then they wait for him, and are guided by his counſell; As their eyes upon him, ſo his eye upon them alſo to guide them in all their wayes.

2. He reveals ſtrengthning, refreſhing ſecrets to thoſe that wait for him; *Pſal.* 27. 14. *Wait on the Lord, and he ſhall ſtrengthen thine heart.* So another choice Scripture to this, *Iſa.* 40. laſt. *But they that wait on the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength: they ſhall mount up with wings as eagles, they ſhall run and not be weary, and they ſhall walk and not be faint.* To omit many curious gloſſes of ſome of the Fathers upon this Scripture, this I take to be the import of it; the Eagles do looſe their feathers, and renew them, and ſo are ſaid *reparaſcere*, to wax young again; ſo the people of God under many faintings and ſinkings of ſpirit, when God walks in a cloud towards them, they renew their ſtrength by waiting upon God, when weary, and fainting by inward diſtreſſes of ſpirit, and the inundations and oppreſſions of enemies. Then the Lord comes in

with a refreshing secret, to bear up their spirits in waiting upon him. Thus *David*, *Psal.* 130.1. *Out of the depths have I cryed unto thee O Lord.* But what relieved him in these depths, he would wait upon his God, *I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, my soul waiteth for the* Lord: ver. 5, 6. as he is there working and composing his spirit to that quieted posture. In a word, that infinite good God that reveals the greatest secret that ever was in heaven to his freinds, the secret of the Covenant of his grace. *Psal.* 25.14. and *Joh.* 15.15. *I have called you freinds, for all that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.* He, I say, that reveals that secret to a soul, will not deny any directing, strengthning, refreshing secret that is fit for that soul to receive.

This is the 4th ground, God reveals great secrets to those that wait for him.

5. It is of blessed example to all that fear God, it puts an excellency and beauty upon godlinesse. This use *David* makes of it. *Psal.* 52. 9. *I will wait on thy name, for it is good before thy Saints.* It is good and comely before the Saints of God, to wait upon, to trust, to expect, to submit, to be contented with Gods wayes; thats the 5th. thing, the people of God encourage one another in keeping close unto God, by waiting on him.

6. The Lords stay is not long to those who wait for him. See ver. 20 of the Chap: of my text: *Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thy self but for a little moment*, &c. So *Isa* 54. 7,8. for a small moment, &c. And in a little wrath, &c. The ready way to keep God off, is to murmure against his absence; but quietly to wait for him, is to bring him down with *great mercies, and everlasting kindnesses*, as that Scripture. This the last ground I shall propose to back the Argument I am upon, his stay in no condition or strait to his people is long, therefore to wait for him.

Thus have I endeavoured to lay before you the nature, extent, and excellency of this frame of spirit of waiting upon God, with the grounds and reasons of the duty. Now I shall endeavour to meet with such evils that oppose this frame of spirit, and to draw forth such seasonable lessons, as may help in the practice of that duty.

Appli: 1. If such a pretious duty be incumbent upon all the people of God,

God thus to wait upon him under his various diſpenſations; it then meets with foure great and abounding evils too riſe among us. 1. Neglecting the diſpenſations of God. 2. Miſapplying them. 3. Murmuring againſt them. 4. Our preſcribings to God.

1. Neglecting, regardleſly ſlighting the ſtrange, and various judgements and dealings of God with us. Theſe you have deſcribed at the 10. 11. and 12. verſes of the chap. of my text, when the judgements of God *are in the earth, they will not learn righteouſneſſe*, neither the righteouſneſſe of God in the world, nor righteouſneſſe for themſelves.

That will not behold the Majeſty of the Lord, breaking forth the glory of his judgements in the world: That *when his hand is liſted up, they will not ſee*; they will not, they will not, denoting even an utter obſtinacy, and obdurateneſſe of ſpirit, hardening their faces againſt the mighty God. I might give many Scriptures to diſcover the wretched condition of ſuch, need I more then what is ſaid of them *v:* 14. *They are dead, they ſhall not live*; Though yet living, yet but as dead men in Gods account; they are deceaſed, they ſhall not riſe; riſe no more, but viſited, deſtroyed, and all their memory periſh.

Are there not multitudes, multitudes to be found (much to be feared) even given up to ſuch a deep ſleep, ſuch a ſenceleſſe, ſtupid obduration of heart, while God is powring forth his vials upon them.

What heart in any meaſure affected with the honour of the great God, can chooſe but be aſtoniſhed, and tremble to hear and obſerve their Atheiſticall darings of God, braving it out againſt him, and too many, alas, of the gallantry of our Nation, as they ſtile themſelves, men, as to a preſent diſcerning, reſolved upon the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon, and will venture for eternity: that give not themſelves the leaſure to conſider where they are, to reflect upon themſelves, but paſſe from one dark delight to another, to ſtifle naturall conſcience, and to drown themſelves in their luſts, that the fear of an avenging God may not ſeize upon them. Ah, oh fearleſſe ſouls! *ſeek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read, Iſa.* 34. 16. what vials of wrath are there ſtored up, and are now began to be powred forth; now the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, now he is *come forth of his place, to*

puniſh

Puniſh the inhabitants of the earth: ver: the laſt of the Chap. of my text. When no place for your exceſſe of riot, what will you do in the day of Gods viſitation? what will you plead to the dreadfull God? oh, fall down at his feet, and viſit him, while he is viſiting you, leaſt he *tear you peices, and there be none to deliver*; Theſe are yet ſo far from having any thing to do with the duty of the text, that tis but a deriſion with them; this the firſt thing utterly repugnant to the leſſon in hand.

2. It meets with our miſapplying the judgements and diſpenſations of God, when the enemies of God, and his people *ſhall ſeem to lean upon the Lord, Is not the Lord amongſt us? Micha* 3. 11. Yea many that fear God have ſure been too buſie here, too buſie with the ſanctuary of God, with the ſecrets of his counſell, the depths of his walkings towards us; If we would ſerve providence intentionally and regularly, it muſt be in Gods way, ſutable to his revealed will; but when God walks in the waters, there we cannot follow him: we can onely ſtand ſtill, and admire him, and wait upon him. Though the depths of providence are to be wiſely conſidered of, God, I ſay, to be admired in them, yet not to be too buſie in unwarrantable pryings into, and determinings of his counſell, and ſo miſapplying his glorious diſpenſations.

Thus, we ſhould attend upon the Lord with leſſe diſtraction, we ſhould be more ſteady in our waies, then we are, yea we ſhould more comfortably wait upon our God, then we do. This the ſecond.

3. It meets with our murmurings againſt the ſtrange and various diſpenſations of God, our repinings, reaſonings, æſtuations of ſpirit, againſt his ſecret wayes, ſome of a higher nature to be joyned with the former rank of men, growing up to an Atheiſticall accuſing the very righteouſneſſe of God, in his permiſſive ordering providence in the great revolutions that we have been under. But I leave ſuch to what I have ſaid before. I ſhall ſpeak to theſe leſſer mixtures of theſe murmurings, even with thoſe that fear God; Murmuring hath like a ſecret canker, even eat out of the ſpirits of many this ſubmiſſive contented waiting upon God; how rife and abounding theſe are, our own mouths accuſe us one to another. This is a very great diſtemper of ſpirit amongſt us; oh what intemperate (to ſay no more) repinings, reaſon-

reasonings, impatient frettings against the present dispensations of God towards us; and truly these do not terminate upon men, but break through men, and ere you are aware, fall foule upon God himself. See *Exod:* 16. 8.

Give me leave, I beseech you, a little to argue with you; What if there are strange turnings of things upside down, the *Lord staining the pride of all the glory of the Nation, whose glorious beauty is as a fading flower? Isa.* 28. 1. What if the wayes of God be full of straits in the hands of men, cannot be traced by you? yea more, what if you say you cannot reconcile the exact righteousnesse of God, to the crooked paths of men? will you thence fret, and murmure, and charge God foolishly? Let me be bold to tell you, you do no better, by the impatient complaints you are still powring forth; let me ask you; Is not every dispensation regular as to God, and wisely ordered by his counsell? why then do you not submit with contentation of spirit unto the Lord, laying your mouths in the dust, justifying him with silence, but thus countend with God? for the Judge of all the world, cannot but do justly.

Yet further, I shall be more close with you; whats become of your tears and prayers that you mingled, and breathed up to heaven in the dayes of your hardship? whats become of the frequent renewings your strength in the Lord? Yea whats become of the magnified experiences of the presence of a gratious God with you? crying, let this God be our God even unto death; must all these be cancelled and remembred no more; be all lost and mispent, because the Lord walks not in such wayes that you would prescribe him, answers not your expectations?

Yea what lookings back unto Ægypt, and wishing our selves there again, because we are kept so long in the wilderneſſe, and meet with so many diversions we expected not?

Lastly, whats become of your ancient zeal for the Lord Christ, his Gospel, ordinances, and people? which was so fresh and lively, when you first vowed and professed your selves to be the Lords people? what faintings and flaggings to be found with such, whose zeal for the Lord of hosts was used to warm the hearts and affections of others; even to a giving up of the work of the Lord? Is this to wait upon our God? to have our expectations lively and pure upon him? truly, tis no more, nor lesse, then

to

to live upon God no longer; not to wait upon him any longer, becauſe we cannot diſcern nor finde out the depths of his wayes. Were the inſide of our murmurings opened, they would be diſcovered to have all theſe mixtures in them; oh what have we loſt by theſe repinings? how are they gone up like a cloud, and eclipſe the light and beauty of the wayes of God from us? yea how are they like to keep us in the wilderneſſe, we being now at the *waters of Marah*, and that none of us, who came out of Ægypt, ſhould ever ſee the Canaan we expect? We are now indeed juſt in the condition as the people of God, ſet forth in *Pſal.* 106. all thoſe wilderneſſe provocations to be charged on us; ſoon *forgetting the works of God, and not waiting for his counſell. v.* 13, 14. *Provoking him with our inventions:* v. 29. *Going ill with Moſes for our ſakes*, v. 32. Thus we have followed our own counſels and inventions, and have not waited for the counſell of the Lord And this leads me to the 4th. evil, which is to be reprooved; our preſcribings to God; the next thing.

How buſie hath every one been, and now is, to preſcribe to God in his dealings towards us, even to mend every diſpenſation of God; it had been better thus, or twere better thus; Is not this to limit the holy one of Iſrael, to preſcribe to him? Oh, how full of theſe inventions are we? As if we were to ſit in counſell with the great God, or as if God were to give an account of his wayes to us; plainly, every one, almoſt, hath a Church and State in this head; and if his way take not, all's loſt. Thus what do we, but even call into queſtion the government and ſoveraignty of God in the world, we would be inſtructors of God, or indeed God's to our ſelves. And now let me demand of you, as in the preſence of God, the diſcerner of all our hearts, whether all theſe evils may not in a great meaſure be charged upon us this day? and are not as a cloud witneſſes againſt us? and then tell me, is not this the way to kindle the wrath of the Lord againſt his people, and to provoke him to abhor his own inheritance, *v.* 40. of *Pſal.* 106. Oh, in a word, Is this to have our truſt, our expectation, our ſubmiſſion, our contentation, our admiration towards our moſt wiſe and gracious God? Is this all the fruit of his owning us his inheritance, and our owning and atteſting him, in the face of all the world, to be our God for ever? Surely the Lord looked

looked for other things at our hands.

Thus I have endeavoured to ſet before you the evils that eat out the heart and life of this grace, and duty of waiting upon God, and ſhall leave you to the ſearching and proving your own hearts and wayes, and to bring them to the great refiner Jeſus Chriſt, that they may be purged away; And indeed were all of us as buſie about the depths of our own hearts, as we are about depths that are beyond, and above us, we ſhould ſee more of the glory of God in all his diſpenſations then we do, the Lord would more delight in us, to reveal himſelf unto us.

That which remains then will be an Exhortation, backt with ſome few directions, that may help us in the excerciſe and framing our ſpirits to the gracious poſture of waiting upon him. *Exhort:* Let us, as hath been ſhewed, be convinced of all the evils that oppoſe it, that they bring a great deformity upon a Chriſtian, and conſider what a luſtre and beauty this grace adorns our profeſſion with; how ſutable to the ſoveraginty of the Lord, and to the experiences we have had of him; and ſo laying our ſelves humbly and compoſedly at his footſtool, quietly waiting that he may be gracious unto us, I ſhall humbly offer ſome brief directions, and ſo leave it to the Lord to work it upon your ſpirits.

1. What ever the wayes of men appear to you to be, look beyond them, ſtay not in them; hence iſſueth much of our diſquietneſſe, that we look not beyond Inſtruments; but lifting up our eyes upon him, let us fall a juſtifying the righteous God, what ever the paths of men are; *True and righteous are thy judgements*, is the hallelujah of heaven, when the vials are powring forth, and ſo it ſhould be the return of the Saints on earth; let men do what they will, they do nothing but in Gods hand, though their ends do run croſſe unto his; this the firſt.

2. Let us not alwayes go about to bring down God to us, I mean the heights and depths of God to our reaſonings; this is it that looſeth us before we are aware, and makes us at ſuch loſſe with God; tis ſafer to ſay with *David*, *Such knowledge is too wonderfull for me, I cannot attain it*: Beware of being too buſie with the ſanctuary of God, tis the way to make him walk at a greater diſtance from us.

3. Let us be ſtill a caſting either way as to events, and be con-

 tented

tented that God may glorifie himſelf upon us, as is his own pleaſure; So *David*, 2 *Sam.* 15. 26. If thus, or thus, here am I; as that Scripture is excellently opened by * one whoſe praiſe is in the Goſpel; if he make us an ark of ſafetie, honour, glory, and praiſe waiteth for him; but if he ſhall come with a full winde, and ſcatter the wheat and the chaffe together over the face of the earth; there we are; we ſhall be ready to juſtifie God in all he ſhall bring upon us.

*Mr. *Vines.*

4. To be humble and diligent in enquiring a right way of God, now things are difficult before us, and full of ſtraits; we had need cloſely to wait upon him, for directing & ſtrengthning ſecrets, that we may *keep his way*; The truth is, the diſtance that the godly keep at, and the ſeverall wayes we purſue, do ſufficiently witnes againſt us, that we have not been a waiting people, elſe we ſhould ſure have had ſuch communications of the counſell of the Lord, that ſhould have kept us, at leaſt, in love and peace; there would be no ſuch waters of Marah troubling, and over-flowing our ſpirits; the diviſions of *Reuben* would not be ſo great; oh that the Lord by me would ſet ſomething home upon your ſpirits, that might quicken you to this diligent enquiring a right way of God; that we go not into crooked paths, not to go aſide from the revealed rule; but waiting upon God, we may ſtill keep his way. *Pſal.* 37. 34.

5. To conſider the abſolute ſoveraignty and independencie of God; this will keep down our ſpirits from riſing up againſt him; you have *David* (on whoſe ſpirit the beauty of this grace ſhines forth almoſt in every Pſalm) much in this contemplation, when he was at a loſſe; *God hath ſpoken once, twice have I heard it, that all power belongs unto God. Pſal.* 62. 11. Be ſtill, and know that I am God; I was dumbe, I opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it: He had heard and conſidered ſo, that all power belonged unto God, therefore, ſtill, dumbe, not opening his mouth; not a word to ſay, againſt Gods diſpenſations: ſo mightily was he over-awed with the ſoveraignty of the Lord.

6. To be much in contemplation of the wiſdome of God, there is the light and glory of his wiſdom, even in a chaos and confuſion of things as we apprehend them, could we diſcern the

ſeverall motions and concamerations, their ſeverall orderings, and their end in which they center; ſee 1 *Sam.*2.3. *Talk no more ſo exceeding proudly, let not arrogancie come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.* How haſtie and inconſiderate ſoever men may be in their tranſactions, yet by him thoſe very actions are wiſely weighed.

7. To concentre, and gather in all our wandring diſcuſſions into this period, that the Almighty ſoveraignty and wiſdom of the Lord are both engaged to work in a way of mercy, goodneſs and love for his people, to all that thus wait upon him; may we reaſon thus? what? a people in covenant with God, and have hard thoughts of him, and be reaſoning againſt his methods of providence? weigh that Scripture, *Ezek.*14.v: laſt: *You ſhall know that I have not done without cauſe, all that I have done in it.* Oh could we thus wait, as a people in covenant, we ſhould at laſt diſcover that God hath not done without cauſe, all that is done upon us; that he had weighty reaſons for all his various and *unexpected* diſpenſations towards us; all in order to the fulfilling of excellent promiſes upon us.

And now, to cloſe all in a word or two; what a luſtre and excellency would this grace, the exerciſe of it, derive upon all that fear God; And at what a deplorable diſtance doth the want of it ſet us at with our God, that *we know not what to do:* we fear a ſnare where ever we tread. Oh there is nothing in the world but this will bring down the Lord to delight and dwell with us, to make us his inheritance, to go before us in the wilderneſſe we are in, till we ſhall be at his feet in this poſture, and willing to follow him where ever he ſhall lead us.

The ſpirits of thoſe in the Nation who have owned the Lord for their God, do caſt different aſpects, ſome for great and glorious things, ready for a new Jeruſalem, even full of expectation to ſing the ſong of the chapter of the text, *We have a ſtrong City, and God is appointing ſalvation for bulwarks:* others, (and tis ſad to mention you in ſuch diſtinct characters) that we are like to paſſe through another fire to it, if ever at all we have it.

I dare not calculate the ſecret diſpenſations we lye under, but, as to the ſymptomes that are at preſent upon us, ſurely the holy God will ſome way or other purge out, in ſome meaſure, the ſelf

ſeekings,

seekings, heart burnings, animosities, murmurings, reas
he will bring us into strait paths, and raise up our spirits
to wait for the mercies he will give forth, as hath been
What ever the Lord hath to do upon us (now he is come
his place, surely to bring about *a work, a strange work: Isa.*
I say, what ever it be, twill be our wisedome to have our
girt, and our lamps burning. Which is the waiting posture
forth by our blessed Lord in the Gospel, strengthned in the
and shining in the beautie of holines; that we may enter.
teous nation keeping truth, with our minds stayed upon him, m
him our everlasting strength, having quietly and conten
waited for him; and then we shall sing, *Lo this is our God, w*
waited for him, and he will save us: This is the Lord, we have
for him, we will rejoyce, and be glad in his salvation. Isa. 25. 9.

FINIS.